

A Comprehension of Filipino Feng Shui Beliefs and its Relevance to Philippine Construction

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Abstract. Feng Shui is an Ancient practiced originated from China that deals with the balance and harmony with nature. In the Philippines, it is believed that Feng Shui gives luck and fortune to the ones who follows especially to the business owners to have a more fruitful life. Aside from the intangible effect given by Feng Shui, there are lack of knowledge if this practices are applicable to the country when it comes to construction. In recent years, there are studies conducted about Feng Shui on different fields but there are little or few done that were related to construction. These study aims to fill the gap on the knowledge of the Filipino especially the people involved in the construction scene. These recommendation may enhance the knowledge and market of civil engineers and architects because of the growing migration of Chinese in the country. Content analysis, inspection and interview were done as an attempt to provide an idea what Feng Shui says and what the codes and laws of the Philippine construction says. The recommendation of the laws and codes and the Feng Shui practices for residential building have been compared.

Keywords: Construction, Feng Shui, Filipino, Residential Building

I. INTRODUCTION

Feng Shui belief is an ancient practice originated from China about the arrangement and placement of things which means “wind” (feng) and “water” (shui). Use of Feng Shui has been prevalent in the Philippines for enhancement of health and lifestyle and commonly applied in Filipino houses. According to some Filipino Architects, Feng Shui principles have largely influenced the Philippine Architecture mainly from setting favorable dates of beginning the construction up to the interior designs of a building (Romulo 2003). According to Feng Shui, all things are governed by unseen forces called qi or chi and categorized into good (luck) and bad (unluck) kinds where believers apply the Feng Shui practices to attract good and ward off the bad (Field 2001). However, Feng shui practices have no certainty about its uses and have no sufficient proof to actually occur.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Feng Shui is not a single idea but composed of several different fields of knowledge of astronomy, astrology, physics, geology, mathematics, philosophy and intuition. (Moran, Yu, and Biktashev 2002). It contains five basic elements describing the substances in the world. These are wood, fire, earth, metal and water and determined by people for space organizing from which every space in the house represent an element in Feng Shui (Zhen and Bahauddin 2017). Energy forces called chi, one fundamental principle in Feng Shui energy inside the body of every person and present on building and structures. Chi is universal and applies from every object that comes from existence.

A study from University of Northern Philippines, Vigan City aimed to discuss traditional custom beliefs and Feng Shui ideas in constructing houses and house blessing in the entire city of Ilocos . This study focuses on the practices of beliefs before and during construction and the reason of Ilocanoes on maintaining those beliefs from generation to generation (Talbo, 2018). A study by Linda and Tanuwidjaja, 2014 was conducted. The study was mixed with review literature and evaluation of in-house to relate the things present in the house with the concept of Feng Shui. he research examined the

applications of Feng Shui could be followed by the owners in their houses and most of it have brought impacts positively. Feng Shui applications in house be accepted as long as it brings comfort and safety to the owners.

III. SYNTHESIS

Having the applications of Feng Shui in buildings brought positive impacts in the environment or in architectural design itself. Studies conducted in Feng Shui are mostly based on architectural purpose and its possible effects in the environment. Architectural design and its construction have equivalent requirements to be followed. The researchers will try to investigate the use of these Feng Shui beliefs in relation to its construction process or engineering practice.

IV. METHODOLOGY

The researchers observed five residential houses that follow the Feng Shui practices in the country. A qualitative method that was observed in the study is a case study research which tests whether a specific theory applies to the event or phenomena in the real world. The chosen Feng Shui practices compare with the existing codes and standards in Philippine construction to determine if there is a logical or scientific basis behind the said practices. The Content analysis was done through analyzing the laws and codes from NSCP 2015 and NBCP in accordance to the section where the selected beliefs has/have been categorized. Interviews were conducted for the house owners following Feng Shui for its compliance with the codes.

V. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The researchers were able to obtain the Feng Shui practices in the Philippines based on the previous study entitled *Feng Shui: Chinoy Style*. The Feng Shui practices are as follows:

1. Doors are not supposed to face each other.
2. Main door should not face any electrical post or dead trees.
3. Stairs must not face any door.
4. Stair steps should not be divisible by four.
5. Water Closet should not face the toilet door.
6. Eating area should not be located below toilets.
7. Round-shaped columns for the exposed columns.
8. Columns must not face doors or windows directly.
9. Even number of columns is preferred but not divisible by four.
10. Foundation should be planted with silver coin.
11. Master's Bed room must occupy the highest elevation of the house.
12. No toilet in the center of the house.
13. Mouth of faucet should face inward
14. No Mirrors facing the bed
15. Round dining table over rectangular one
16. Main door of the house does not face the gate of neighbor's house
17. No beams or heavy objects above the bed
18. Bed should not rest on a wall that has water closet on the other side
19. Round dining table over rectangular one
20. Headboard should rest against the wall

The Feng Shui beliefs are compared to NSCP 2015 and NBCP (National Building Code of the Philippines). The beliefs compared and have no violation observed relating to the 2 codes. An interview was conducted to know the insights of the homeowner of the house that was inspected for the study.

House 1



Figure 1. Stairs Facing Door

1. Stairs must not face any door.

The first house that was inspected was owned and designed by a Chinese architect who is also has a knowledge when it comes to Feng Shui. The door facing opposite to the stairs is a violation to the Feng Shui. However, according to the owner, he does not want to compromise the aesthetic design of the house since Feng Shui violation has countermeasures.

2. Doors are not supposed to face each other.

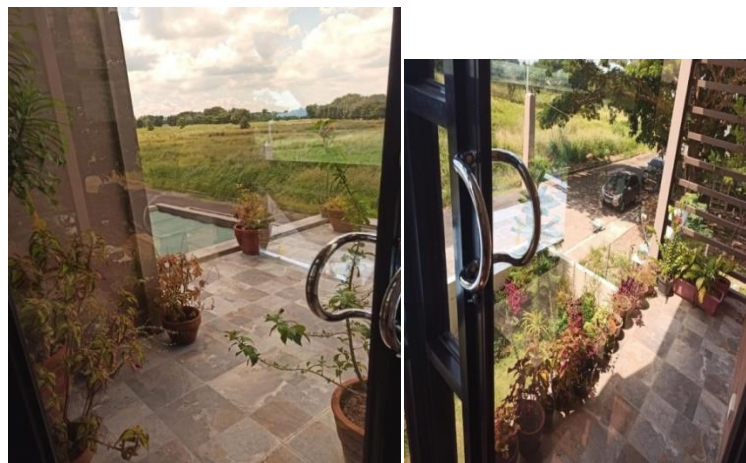


Figure 2. Doors Facing Each Other

According to one of the owner and architect of the house that was inspected, since the door that was facing each other is not a common human passage, it is just fine to have it opposing each other. Feng Shui beliefs are being applied and done on the design process that would no longer be the scope of the study. There is no violation of the codes that was observed in the house.

House 2

The house owner states that it is their choice to follow the Feng Shui beliefs on the construction of the house. The house owner claims that Feng Shui is not really a luxury nor a necessity for them as half-Chinese. Not a luxury since everything will pay off on the future that the Feng Shui brings and not a necessity, but more on a tradition.

House 3

Based on the interview with the house owner, Feng Shui is not a necessity and quite luxurious. It is considered luxurious if the house owner is not on the upper class status. When it comes to the design, he pointed that it does not really matter that much to change the design of the structure if it would provide him and his family a better fortune. The owner would recommend to practice Feng Shui for the ones who can afford it.

House 4



Figure 3. Round Outer Column is preferred

The fourth house was owned by a police officer and was not really knowledgeable about the different Feng Shui practices, but hired someone to do it for them. According to the house owner, Feng Shui was not really a necessity for them, but there is no harm in following especially when it is believed to provide a good fortune for the family. At the inspection, there is no violation of the code that was observed. In the design process, they did not encounter any conflict between the Feng Shui and what the engineers say.

House 5

The last house that was inspected also followed the different Feng Shui practices. Based on the inspection, there are no observed violations of code on the part of the house where Feng Shui was followed. Unfortunately, the original owner of the house who decided the design of the house is already deceased and no one is available to speak on their behalf.

VI. CONCLUSIONS

Overall, it is safe to adapt the Feng Shui beliefs, without considering other constraints that were not in the code, that were chosen for the logical reason behind the Feng Shui belief matches the ones stated in the codes and laws they just have different interpretations in its effect.

VII. RECOMMENDATIONS

The study of Feng Shui and Philippine Construction individually is very broad. In the given span of time for the study, it would not be feasible to tackle and fully understand each and every concept and factor of each. For the future researchers, we enumerated the different ways to improve the study:

- Choose a smaller scope of study or have a specific location for the study.
- Feng Shui beliefs are broad, choose one specific belief to study for better comprehension.
- Philippine Construction is broad as well, choose a specific area of construction to focus.
- There are lots of possible factors that the Feng Shui can influence the construction setting, choose one specific factor to focus.

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